

Language and Culture

**EDSL 582 (3 credits)
Spring session 2012
M.A. in Education
Eastern Mennonite University**

Instructor: R. Michael Medley, Ph.D.

Office: Campus Center 345

Office phone: (540) 432-4051

Home phone: (540) 574-4277

e-mail: medley@emu.edu

Skype name: [rm.medley](https://www.skype.com/user/rm.medley)

Virtual office hours: Tue. & Thur. 3:00-5:00 p.m.

(please feel free to give me feedback on these office hours; I am willing to make adjustments to times that suit you better)

Description:

This course is designed to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate ways in which culture and language mutually influence each other. Course participants will gain greater appreciation for the issues of identity, power, and inequality that stem from linguistic diversity. In the first part of the course, we discuss the basic terminology and frameworks provided for the study of language and culture by the field of sociolinguistics. In the second part of the course, we focus on the linguistic situation in the United States, particularly as it applies to the education of minority-language speakers. Finally, we will consider the role of culture in the language teaching/language learning process. Throughout the course we will try to learn from the experiences of minority-language speakers in the United States and the situations in other multilingual nations of the world.

Course Outcomes:

When you have successfully completed the requirements for this course, you should be able to:

- articulate the many ways in which language and culture are interconnected (S.1, C.1)
- educate others about the beliefs and myths surrounding the influence of language and culture in the educational process (S.1, I.1)
- evaluate proposals for language policy and language planning (S.1, PK.6)
- exert a positive influence on planning and programming for language minority children in the school(s) where you work (PK.1, PK.4, PK.6, CR.2, SE.1)
- actively promote ways for minority-language speakers to be empowered to participate in all levels of society (CR.1, CR.4)

Key Questions the Course Seeks to Answer:

Global questions

- I. While we realize that language proficiency is prerequisite for academic success, why can't we just focus on building that proficiency along with academic skills and content without also bringing in culture?
- II. What socio-cultural factors influence the acquisition and use of language, and how do acquisition, usage, and socio-cultural factors link with personal identity?
- III. What linguistic and socio-cultural factors influence the acquisition of literacy skills?

Supplementary questions:

- A. What intercultural communication skills do teachers and administrators need in order to work with multicultural and multilingual learners more effectively?

- B. What content knowledge should teachers and administrators have about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of particular ethnic groups in order to work with them more effectively?
- C. What are the implications of “language and culture” concepts for curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom management?
 - (i) How can teachers’ increased understanding of language and culture (or lingua-culture) help them in more effectively serving students who speak other languages or non-mainstream dialects of English?
 - (ii) What knowledge and skills gained from this course can teachers use for empowering their students to learn more effectively together and later to participate successfully in all levels of society?
- D. What are the implications of “language and culture” concepts for types and structures of programs?
 - (i) What kinds of program models should teachers and administrators be familiar with in order to exert an influence in their schools/districts?
 - (ii) What do teachers need to understand about language and culture to critique/evaluate/reform program models?

Knowledge Base Rationale:

It is the position of all learned societies in the field of linguistics, including that of AILA (Association International de Linguistique Appliquee), the LSA (Linguistic Society of America) and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), that all languages are equal in linguistic terms. In the words of “The Linguistic Creed” of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (the academic wing of Wycliffe Bible Translators): “any language is capable of being a vehicle for complicated human interaction and complex thought, and can be the basis for a complex culture and civilization. Therefore, all languages deserve respect and careful study.” In our world, however, a few languages are associated with wealth and power, while many other languages are not. Since societies are multi-lingual, the status of a person’s native language is directly related to the kinds of prospects that person has in life (schooling, marriage, job). At the same time, one cannot change one’s native language any more than one could change one’s gender or race; one’s native language is acquired through biologically based mechanisms operating within a certain window of time in an infant’s development. Since language is intimately connected with culture, the twin forces of language and culture play a critical role in both the learner’s identity and the educational process. These perspectives form the foundation from which we will explore issues of language in education, both in the United States and in other countries.

Required texts:

Linda Watkins-Goffman, *Lives in Two Languages: An Exploration of Identity and Culture* (University of Michigan Press, 2001)

Marcia Farr, Lisy Seloni, and Juyoung Song, *Ethnolinguistic Diversity and Education: Language, Literacy and Culture* (Routledge, 2010)

Patricia Ruggiano Schmidt and Althier M. Lazar, *Practicing What We Teach: How Culturally Responsive Literacy Classrooms Make a Difference* (Teachers College Press, 2011)

Other readings as provided by the instructor through Moodle

Course Requirements:

You are expected to do the assigned reading or viewing, participate in class discussions using the **Discussion Forums** on Moodle, and complete several small projects in addition to a research project. Details about these projects will be posted in the **Project Description** section of our Moodle page. You will submit your projects through ports provided at the bottom of the Moodle page. Your research project and possibly two other projects will be submitted through “Turnitin” a program designed to detect plagiarism.

The calendar of assignments attached to this syllabus lets you know generally which readings should be completed for each week of the course. However, details of the assignments for each week are found in the **Weekly Assignments** section of our Moodle page, so when in doubt, follow the instructions given in **Weekly Assignments**. Readings in addition to the required textbooks will be made available through the **Lecture Notes and Supplementary Readings** section of Moodle.

Unlike some online courses, which are self-paced, in this course we try to stay together with assignments as a class. That has direct implications for our discussions of the materials. See the separate document here under **Course Information & Procedures** for a description of how discussions will be conducted. I will provide some questions to prompt discussion; you are also invited regularly to pose questions that we all can discuss. Up to ten discussion points for each week will be allotted for your participation in the discussion up through midnight on the last day of the class week, which will always be Sunday. For certain weeks of the course, alternate assignments may take the place of the discussion [details to be provided in **Weekly Assignments**].

During one week of the semester, our weekly discussions will include computer-mediated interactions with one or more persons in Mauritania, a country on the Atlantic coast of West Africa situated on the Western edge of the Sahara Desert. Mauritanian participants may ask you questions, too, and initiate topics of interest. Part of the rationale for this activity is to let you share in my experiences in Mauritania, where I will be from Feb. 28 to March 10 to conduct workshops at the University of Nouakchott for faculty and students on (a) genre & grammar in second language writing instruction, (b) language & culture, and (c) peacebuilding & language learning

Each participant will complete a research project which may involve one of the following options: (a) writing a paper profiling an immigrant family, (b) investigating the sociolinguistic and cultural experiences of an immigrant through extended interviews, or (c) engaging in an experiential learning and reflection activity. This paper is due by April 10. Research projects will be posted to a forum on Moodle so that you may all read, benefit from and respond to your colleagues' research. [For details, see separate instructions for the research project.]

Evaluation:

Contributions to class discussions (up to 12 weeks @ 10 points/wk—may be fewer)	120
Language & culture collaborative 'e-scrap book'	20
Film, culture & identity presentation	20
Diverse communities report	20
Research Project	60
Total possible:	250

To determine the final letter grade, the percentage of points earned will be calculated: 90-100% A; 80-89% B; 70-79% C.

I will use the grade book function of Moodle to record your grades, so you may access them at anytime. If you have questions about why I gave you a certain number of points, please do ask. Sometimes I make mistakes, and your question can help me to maintain a correct record.

Virtual Office Hours:

I will be available to you for real-time interactions relating to any issues arising from the course through the chat function of Moodle. You access this chat function by clicking on **Office Hours** (under Course Information & Procedures) and then click to enter the chat or to view recordings of past chats. Enter your

text in the small box at the very bottom of the screen that opens. If you have want to have a private, individual conference with me during office hours use my Skype account (username: rm.medley). You may also call me during office hours at the number above.

E-mail responses:

Because of the nature of this course, it will not be possible for me to give immediate responses to all emails that come my way. I do tend to be an "email freak"--meaning I spend too much time each day working on email. In order to keep my work and life in balance, I will be try to be conservative in responding to your emails, so except for emergencies, I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours though many times you may get immediate answers. Please feel free to use the email and forum functions of Moodle to consult with each other; and do make use of the weekly or twice-weekly virtual office hours to contact me with questions that you have.

Working ahead

There may be times when you want to begin on the next week's assignment, or even work two weeks ahead. I will always try to have the assignments and other necessary documents posted two weeks ahead of time so that you can work ahead if you like. If you enter comments or questions in the discussion board, remember these two things: (a) be sure to post your comments in the right forum for the week you are working on; and (b) be aware that other folks not working at your speed will probably not see and respond to your comments/questions until later. So you must remember to go back and check the responses during the relevant week.

Late work policy

Please try always to submit your work on time. That means participate in discussions on time and submit other assignments on time, including the research project. In an online course designed like this one, where we proceed together, it is important to be considerate of others and their need to see the work that you post. Almost all assignments will be accessible to others in the class. In this way, you are not only taught by me, but you learn a great deal from each other. I will deduct 5% of the points for work that is up to three days late and 10% of the points for work 4-7 days late. No assignments will be accepted more than 7 days past the due date except ones for which you have made special arrangements with me. There may be cases where circumstances warrant pardoning late work with no penalty assessed. The important thing is to keep in contact with me if you intend to submit any assignment late.

Plagiarism policy

Documentation is a crucial part of academic papers. Be sure you know how to do it properly, for print media as well as for web sites. Use APA style and formatting consistently. Check a reliable handbook like the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th edition, 1994) for things about which you are not certain. Advice for documenting sources in APA format can be found at <http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>. The Purdue University Online Writing Lab also provides helpful guidance in the use of APA style at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. Your paper for this class should contain a list of references at the end, and this list should only contain articles, books, pamphlets, reports, or web sites you have cited in the text of your paper.

If you do not have access to the APA publication manual mentioned above, most college handbooks for writing include the essentials of APA style documentation. The official handbook for all EMU programs is currently *The Everyday Writer* (3rd edition) by Andrea A. Lunsford (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005).

Students at Eastern Mennonite University are accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Thus, you should be familiar with EMU's Academic Integrity Policy in order to meet the academic expectations concerning appropriate documentation of sources. In addition, EMU is

using Turnitin, a learning tool and plagiarism prevention system. For this class, you will submit your papers to Turnitin from Moodle. When grading your work, I will interpret the originality report accordingly, and I will follow the Academic Integrity Policy as appropriate. For more information about and a demo of Turnitin, please see this site: <http://turnitin.com/static/>. Note that submitted papers become part of the Turnitin.com database.

EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly before God. EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one's own someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. (Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators). [Taken from "Academic Integrity," 2011-12 Undergraduate Catalog.]

This course will apply EMU's Academic Integrity Policy to any events of academic dishonesty. See the Graduate Catalog, pp. 9-11 (accessible online here <http://www.emu.edu/catalog/graduate/policies.pdf>) for a description of the procedures and penalties. Please note that what may seem to be small things like unacknowledged quotations, paraphrasing too closely, or sloppy documentation may be taken in combination with each other to constitute a substantial violation of the academic integrity policy, resulting in a zero for the assignment. For less serious infractions of this policy, I may deduct 25% of the total points from the score as a penalty.

This page gives you an overview of the entire course, but the specific readings mentioned are *only tentative*. There will be changes in the exact reading assignments--especially supplementary materials--as the course goes on. Changes in readings suggested by course participants are welcomed. You can know the details for sure by reading the assignment folder at the beginning of each week. You find the assignment folders in the ASSIGNMENTS section of Moodle.

Week	Dates	Topic/Work	Supplementary Materials
Introducing Language and Culture			
Pre-course	Jan. 9-15	Warm-up Get familiar with Moodle. Edit your profile to introduce yourself to others in the class. Read a few items in Moodle that introduce you to the course.	<i>Syllabus & Calendar</i> <i>FAQs</i> <i>Forum procedures</i> <i>Course principles</i> <i>Self-reflection</i> <i>Human language rights</i>
Lived Experiences: Language, Culture and Identity			
I	Jan. 16-22	Read & discuss <i>Lives in Two Languages</i> pp. 1-42. Begin work on our language & culture scrapbook.	<i>Whirlwind tour items</i> <i>Notes on culture, lang. & identity</i> <i>Schumann & Norton</i> <i>Stereotyping</i>
II	Jan. 23-29	Read & discuss <i>Lives in Two Languages</i> pp. 43-96.	<i>Ethnography of speaking</i> <i>Gender & communication</i>
III	Jan. 30- Feb. 5	Read & discuss <i>Lives in Two Languages</i> pp. 97-127. Last date for Language & Culture e-scrapbook postings	<i>Written vs. oral language</i>
Research Perspectives on Language and Culture with Respect to Ethnicity, Race, & Education			
IV	Feb. 6-12	Read & discuss <i>Ethnolinguistic Diversity</i> Intro. 1-11; Wiley & de Klerk 23-39 Begin work on the film project	<i>Culture clash</i> <i>Film of your choice (list of suggestions to be provided)</i>
V	Feb. 13-19	Read & discuss <i>Ethnolinguistic Diversity</i> Farr, 44-66; Garcia, 193-207	<i>Diaz-Moll-Mehan</i> <i>Grosjean/code-switching</i>
VI	Feb. 20-26	Read & discuss <i>Ethnolinguistic Diversity</i> McCarty et al, 69-94 Due: Film, culture & identity project	<i>Shirley Brice Heath</i>
VII	Feb. 27-Mar. 4	Read & discuss <i>Ethnolinguistic Diversity</i> Wolfram, 129-149 ; Hudley, 167-190; Rickford & Rickford, 241-256	<i>Lessons from Two Classics</i> <i>Rickford "Suite for Ebony & Phonics"</i>
VIII	Mar. 5-11	Research and prepare your report	<i>Mauritania reading/discussion</i>

		on language & literacy acquisition in a particular ethnic community. Due: Reports on language and literacy acquisition in diverse contexts	
Imagining Possibilities for Linguistically & Culturally Responsive Teaching			
IX	Mar. 12-18	Read and discuss chapter 1 of <i>Practicing What We Teach</i> plus two other chapters of your choice from chapters 2 through 6	<i>Depending on the needs & interests of the class additional readings may be announced</i>
X	Mar. 19-25	Read and discuss from <i>Practicing What We Teach</i> any three chapters of your choice from chapters 7 through 12	
XI	Mar. 26-Apr. 1	Read and discuss from <i>Practicing What We Teach</i> any three chapters of your choice from chapters 13 through 18	
XII	April 2-8	Limited discussion of public policy issues related to L&CRT	<i>Language & education policies Asset/deficit thinking Concerns of the public & parents</i>
Easter recess	Apr. 5-9	Good Friday through Easter Monday	
XIII	Apr. 10-16	Due: Research projects – April 10 Read & respond to research projects Core concepts wrap-up Complete course evaluations	<i>A Christian perspective</i>

SOME RESOURCES FOR EDSL 582--Language and Culture

[I apologize that the format for these items deviates from APA style. I have given the Hartzler Library call numbers for many of them; almost all of these books should be available from Hartzler.]

Alim, H.S. (2004). *You know my steez: An Ethnographic and sociolinguistic study of styleshifting in a Black American speech community*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Baker, Colin (1992). *Attitudes and languages*. Multilingual Matters. 404.2 B167a

Baron, Dennis (1990). *The English-only question*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Berry, John W., Phinney, Jean S, Sam, David L., and Vedder, Paul (Eds.) (2006). *Immigrant youth in cultural transition: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation across national contexts*. Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. (2006).

- Byrum, Michael. (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters
- Byram, M. and Fleming, M. eds. (1998). *Language learning in intercultural perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carvill, B. and Smith, D. (2000). *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cummins, Jim. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Damen, Louise (1987). *Culture Learning: The fifth dimension in the language classroom*. Addison Wesley. 418.007 D157c
- DeCapua, A. and Wintergerst, A.C. (2004). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- DePalma, Renee. (2010) *Language Use in the Two-Way Classroom: Lessons from a Spanish-English Bilingual Kindergarten*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Downer, William (1998). *Language and society* 306.44D7511
- Edelsky, Carol (1996) *With literacy and justice for all: Rethinking the social in language and education* (2nd edition) London: Taylor and Francis. 428.007 E37w
- Edwards, John (1984) *Linguistic minorities: Policies and pluralism*. Academic Press. 305.7 L755
- Edwards, John (1995). *Multilingualism*. Routledge. 306.446 E26m
- Eggington, William and Helen Wren (eds.) (1997). *Language policy: Dominant English, pluralist challenges*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Flaitz, Jeffra. (2006). *Understanding your Refugee and Immigrant Students: An Educational, Cultural, and Linguistic Guide*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Freeman, Yvonne S., Freeman, David E. and Mercuri, Sandra. (2002). *Closing the Achievement Gap: How to Reach Limited-Formal-Schooling and Long-Term English Learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gilyard, Keith (2011). *True to the Language Game: African American Discourse, Cultural Politics, and Pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.
- Grosjean, Francois (1987). *Life with two languages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grosjean, Francois. (2008). *Studying Bilinguals* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, K. David. (2007). *When languages die: The extinction of the world's languages and the erosion of human knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hornberger, N. (ed) *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins*. Multilingual Matters.

- Hornberger, N. (ed) (2003). *Continua of Biliteracy: An Ecological Framework for Educational Policy, Research, and Practice in Multilingual Settings*. Multilingual Matters.
- Igoa, Cristina. (1995). *The inner world of the immigrant child*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Irujo, Suzanne (1998). *Teaching bilingual children*. Pacific Grove, CA: Heinle & Heinle
- Kabuto, Bobbie. (2010). *Becoming Biliterate: Identity, Ideology, and Learning to Read and Write in Two Languages*. New York: Routledge.
- Kraemersch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kraemersch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject: What language learners and users say about their experience*. Oxford: OUP.
- Lantolf, James P. and Thorne, Steven L. (2006). *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lippi-Green, Rosina (1997). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. London: Routledge.
- Loveday, Leo (1982). *The sociolinguistics of learning and using a non-native language* 401.L897S
- Macedo, D. (1994). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- McKay, Sandra Lee and Wong, Sau-Ling Cynthia (1988). *Language diversity: Problem or resource?* New York: Newbury House.
- McKay, Sandra Lee and Wong, Sau-Ling Cynthia (2000). *New immigrants in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter (1996). *Linguistic ecology*. Routledge. 306.44091823 M952I
- Murray, Denise E. (1992). *Diversity as resource: Redefining cultural literacy* 428.007 D618
- Newmeyer, Frederick J. (1988). *Language: The socio-cultural context* 401.9 L287st
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity, and educational change*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Nunan and Choi. (2010). *Language and Culture: Reflective Narratives and the Emergence of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Palmer, Gary B. (1996). *Toward a theory of cultural linguistics* 306.44089 P174t
- Pavlenko, Aneta (ed) (2011). *Thinking and Speaking in Two Languages*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters

- Perez, Bertha (ed.) (1998). *Sociocultural contexts of language and literacy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Phillipson, Robert (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: OUP.
- Rigg, Pat and Virginia G. Allen (1989) National Council of Teachers of English. *When they don't all speak English* 428.007 W567
- Risager, Karen. (2006) *Language and Culture: Global Flows and Local Complexity*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Romaine, Suzanne (1994). *Language in society: An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Oxford: OUP.
- Schäffner, Christina and Anita L. Wenden (1995). *Language and peace*. Brookfield USA. 306.44 L287
- Schiffman, Harold F. (1996). *Linguistic culture and language policy* 306.449S3331
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T., Phillipson, R. and Mohanty, A.K. (2009). *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters
- Smith, David I. and Osborn, Terry A. (2007) *Spirituality, Social Justice, and Language Learning* (Contemporary Language Education). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Soto, Lourdes Diaz (1997). SUNY, *Language, culture, and power* 370.117 S7181
- Tollefson, J.W. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality*. Longman. 306.449 T651p
- Trueba, Henry, T. (1989). *Raising silent voices: Educating the linguistic minorities for the 21st century*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- United States Institute of Peace. (n.d.) *Teaching Guide for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding*.
<www.usip.org/class>
- Valdes, Joyce Merrill (1986). *Culture bound*. Cambridge University Press. 418.007 C968
- Wierzbicka, Anna. *Experience, Evidence and Sense: The Hidden Cultural Legacy of English*.